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THE PHANTOM™

#14
MOONSTONE™
$3.50

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THE PHANTOM

created by LEE FALK

"WALKER'S LINE"

PART ONE OF TWO

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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT
ED RHOADES

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RAARR
UP, ARES!
I'M SORRY, ARES, YOUR MOMMA ISN'T COMING BACK.
MRRRRRR
DID YOU KILL THEM?

"KILL" WHOM?
THE BAD MEN WHO KILLED ARES' MOTHER.
NO...
...KILLING IS NOT THE PHANTOM'S WAY.
BUT, FATHER, THEY DESERVE IT!
THAT'S NOT FOR US TO DECIDE, KIT.
WHEN THE PHANTOM TAKES THE OATH OF THE SKULL, HE TAKES ON A RESPONSIBILITY TO FIGHT CRUELTY, GREED AND INJUSTICE.
KILLING SOMEONE IS AN INJUSTICE. LET ME TELL YOU A STORY...

"IT WAS ALMOST A YEAR AFTER YOUR GRANDFATHER WAS MURDERED. HIS KILLERS HAD STOLEN HIS GUN BELT AND I JUST COULDN'T LIVE WITH THAT. I HAD TO GET IT BACK."
"I WAS TRACKING THE KILLERS AND THEIR TRAIL LED ME BACK TO AMERICA, BUT SOON TURNED COLD. LUCKILY, I WOUND UP NEAR CLARKSVILLE, THE TOWN WHERE I WENT TO SCHOOL WHILE LIVING WITH MY AUNT AND UNCLE."
"THERE ARE TIMES, THE NATIVES SAY, WHEN THE PHANTOM LEAVES THE JUNGLE AND WALKS THE STREETS OF THE TOWN AS AN ORDINARY MAN" - OLD JUNGLE SAYING
CLARKSVILLE, MISSOURI 50 MILES
YES, AUNT BESSIE, I'LL BE THERE IN THE MORNING. I'M GOING TO STAY AT A HOTEL HERE TONIGHT.
HEH... NO, MA'AM, GURAN ISN'T WITH ME.
OKAY, I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.

"YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW SCARED I WAS TO SEE THE POLICEMEN SURROUNDING UNCLE EPHRAIM."
KIT! YOUR AUNT BESSIE'S BEEN HURT. SHE'S IN THE INTENSIVE CARE UNIT AT CLARKSVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL.
SHE WENT TO GET SOMETHING FOR YOU, BUT NEVER MADE IT BACK TO HER CAR.
GIVE IT TO ME, OLD WOMAN!
THOSE GANG BANGERS ROUGHED HER UP PRETTY GOOD.
NO! MY NEPHEW GAVE THAT TO ME!
AND NOW YOU'RE GIVING IT TO US, WITCH!
NOW THE DOCTORS TELL ME SHE MIGHT NOT MAKE IT...

"SEEING HER LYING IN THAT HOSPITAL BED, ON THE VERGE OF DEATH, REALLY SHOOK ME TO THE CORE."
SHE WAS SO *EXCITED* TO HEAR YOU WERE COMING FOR A VISIT. I NEVER WOULD HAVE LET HER GO TO THE MALL SO LATE AT NIGHT BY HERSELF, BUT SHE WOULDN'T WAIT FOR ME TO GET HOME.
SHE INSISTED SHE HAD TO GET YOU *SOMETHING*.
WHO DID THIS? WHY? AUNT BESSIE WOULD *NEVER* HURT ANYONE...
A STREET GANG. THEY CAME TO TOWN NOT LONG AFTER YOU LEFT.
A "STREET GANG"?
THINK OF THEM AS A TRIBE OF *EVIL* MEN WITH NO HONOR.
THE NEWSPAPER IS ALWAYS RUNNING STORIES ON THE *BAD THINGS* THEY'VE DONE, BUT I *NEVER THOUGHT* IT WOULD AFFECT US...
OH, KIT. *WHY* DIDN'T I PUT MY FOOT DOWN?
I SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN* IT WASN'T SAFE FOR HER TO GO THERE AT NIGHT, BUT CLARKSVILLE HAS ALWAYS BEEN SUCH A NICE PLACE.

"IT WAS LIKE WATCHING MY MOTHER AND FATHER DIE ALL OVER AGAIN. I COULDN'T HELP BUT FEEL LIKE THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME. WHY ELSE WOULD EVERYONE I LOVED DIE AND LEAVE ME ALL ALONE?"
THIS NEVER WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF I HADN'T TOLD HER I WAS COMING BACK.
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT SON. I'M SURE YOU WERE AS EXCITED TO SEE HER AS SHE WAS TO SEE YOU.
EVER SINCE YOU LOST YOUR PARENTS, I'VE BEEN ACUTELY AWARE THAT WE'RE ALL YOU HAVE LEFT. IT'S ONLY NATURAL YOU'D WANT TO SEE US AS MUCH AS WE'D WANT TO SEE YOU.
I GAVE HER THAT NECKLACE TO PROTECT HER. NOT TO BRING HER INTO HARM'S WAY...
THE NEXT MORNING.
IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE TO PRAY TO, GENTLEMAN, I SUGGEST YOU DO SO NOW.
THE DAY AFTER THAT.
AND THE DAY AFTER THAT...

"ON THE FOURTH DAY, SHE WOKE UP BRIEFLY..."
I'M SORRY I PUT YOU IN DANGER, AUNT BESSIE.
NONSENSE! ~COUGH~ YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING OF THE SORT...
IF ANYONE SHOULD FEEL REGRET IT'S ME. I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO YOUR UNCLE AND WAITED FOR HIM. NOW LOOK WHAT I'VE DONE TO YOU BOYS.
HUSH! YOU NEED TO THINK POSITIVE THOUGHTS NOW, BESSIE. NO WIFE OF MINE IS GOING TO LAY AROUND THIS HOSPITAL FEELING SORRY FOR ME, KIT OR HERSELF.
AUNT BESSIE, THAT NECKLACE WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT YOU, NOT CAUSE YOU PAIN AND SUFFERING.
I'M SO SORRY...
YOU BE QUIET, TOO! THIS IS NO TIME FOR A BUNCH OF LONG FACES AND SOUR PUSSES!
WHY DON'T YOU GO FOR A WALK, KIT. THE FRESH AIR MIGHT DO YOU SOME GOOD AFTER BEING COOPED UP IN HERE FOR THE LAST FOUR DAYS.
QUIET NOW, BESSIE, YOU JUST REST...

"I SPOKE WITH HER DOCTOR AFTER LEAVING THE ROOM AND HE DIDN'T OFFER MUCH HOPE. HE SAID SHE MIGHT PULL THROUGH, BUT IT WOULD BE TOUCH AND GO FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS. SO, I FOLLOWED UNCLE EPHRAIM'S ADVICE AND WENT TO CLEAR MY HEAD."
GANG SHOOTING!
GET A DOCTOR OUT HERE! THIS MAN IS LOSING BLOOD FAST!
HIS PULSE IS GETTING FAINT!
SIR, YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE.
I'M SORRY. IS THAT MAN GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT?
MOST GANG VIOLENCE DOESN'T TURN OUT GOOD. BUT WE CAN ALWAYS PRAY FOR A MIRACLE.
DOCTOR! WE'VE LOST HIM...

IT'S A TERRIBLE SHAME!
I BEG YOUR PARDON?
THIS USED TO BE SUCH A NICE TOWN. PEOPLE COULD LEAVE THEIR FRONT DOORS UNLOCKED. FOLKS COULD WALK DOWN THE STREET AND FEEL SAFE.
NOW IT'S GETTING SO FOLKS CAN'T EVEN GO OUTDOORS WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT THAT GANG.
YOU KNOW WHAT THIS TOWN NEEDS, YOUNG MAN? IT NEEDS A TIGER TO CHASE OFF THOSE JACKALS.
WHY, IF I WAS IN MY PRIME, I'D SHOW THOSE PUNKS A THING OR TWO.
WHERE'D HE GO? DAD-GUM YOUNG FOLKS CAN'T SIT STILL LONG ENOUGH THESE DAYS TO CARRY ON A POLITE CONVERSATION.

I KNOW I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HELP ANT BESSIE, BUT I DO WISH I KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT CHASING OFF JACKALS.
DID YOU CATCH MY HIGH SCORE ON THAT NEW GAME?
ALL YOU TALK ABOUT IS THOSE STUPID ARCADE GAMES.
YOU BETTER HOPE YOU DIDN'T SPEND ALL YOUR MOMMY'S MONEY IN THAT ARCADE, PRETTY BOY.
WH-WHAT D-DO YOU W-WANT?
"WH-WH-WHAT D-D-DO Y-YOU W-WANT?"
HEH HEH HEH HEH. WHAT A PUNK!
HE ASKED YOU A QUESTION, JERK!

HERE'S WHAT WE *WANT*, PRETTY BOY. GIVE ME YOUR WALLET...AND YOUR GIRL.
NOW!
DO IT *NOW*, MAN, OR I'M GONNA CUT YOU AND LET YOU *BLEED*...
L-LOOK MAN, J-JUST *BACK OFF* AND LEAVE US ALONE.
I TELL YOU WHAT, LITTLE MAN. YOU AND YOUR *BOY-TOY* LEAVE AND ME AND MY HOMIES WILL SHOW THESE CHICKIES A *REAL* GOOD TIME.
HEH HEH HEH HEH
COME *HERE*, CHICKIE!
GET OFF ME!

DIDN'T YOUR MOTHER EVER TEACH YOU NOT TO PAW AT A LADY?
GR-UNG!
"PHANTOM HAS THE STRENGTH OF TEN TIGERS"-OLD JUNGLE SAYING

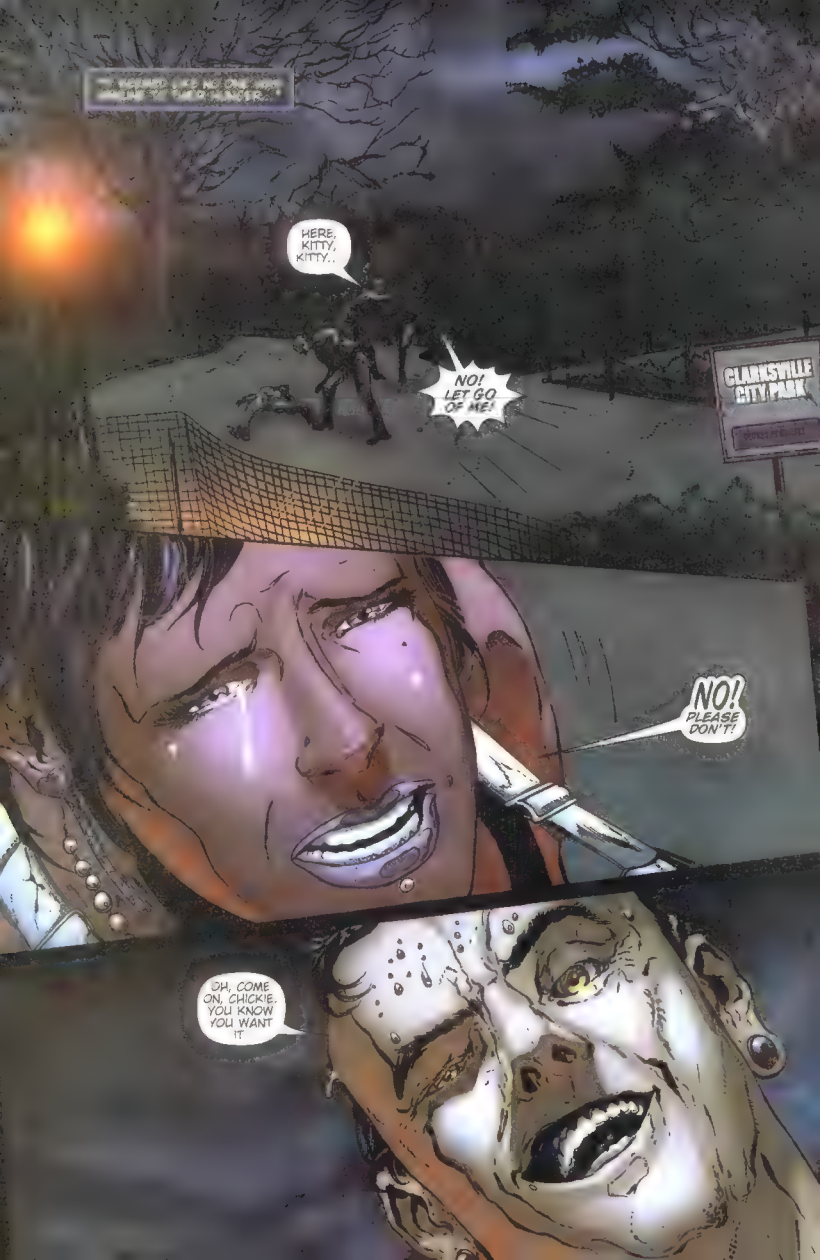
WHAT IS THIS, ESA, A COSTUMED PARTY?
NO, ACTUALLY, IT LOOKS LIKE A CLASSROOM. AND I'M ABOUT TO START THE LESSON, SO...
SHIK SHIK
...SIT DOWN!
GONNA GUT YOU LIKE A FISH, MAN!
YOU SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH KNIVES...
...YOU COULD GET HURT.
WHAM

WHERE IS THE NECKLACE?
WH-WHAT "NECKLACE"?
THE NECKLACE WITH THIS MARK. WHERE IS IT?
I NEVER SEEN THAT BEFORE, MAN!
SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. A GUY IN A PURPLE COSTUME DID ALL THIS?
YES. HE SAVED US! HE'S A HERO!
WELL, WHERE IS THIS "HERO" NOW?
HE TOOK OFF WHEN HE HEARD YOUR SIRENS. WE DON'T KNOW

"...WHERE HE WENT."
"I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW FAST THOSE JACKALS HAD SUNK THEIR TEETH INTO CLARKSVILLE. AND I WAS APPALLED AT THE LEVEL OF GREED AND CRUELTY THEY SHOWED."
YOU MISSED YOUR PAYMENT LAST WEEK, OLD MAN
I'VE GIVEN YOU EVERYTHING WE HAD IN THE SLUSH FUND. I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING ELSE OR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL FIND OUT WE HAVE NO MONEY AND SHUT US DOWN.
THEY'LL SEND ME TO JAIL!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, HOMES? YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T BE DOGGING US ON THE CASH FLOW.
WELL, THAT'S NOT OUR PROBLEM, ESA. AND YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT JAIL IF YOU DON'T PAY US.
THERE WON'T BE NO CELL WAITIN' FOR YOU, JUST A COFFIN, HOMES!
NOW, GET BACK IN THERE AND GET THEM LIVING CORPSES TO PAY UP, OLD MAN. OR YOU'LL BE THE ONE NEEDING SOME ASSISTANCE LIVING.
HEY! WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHT?

YOU NEED LIGHT? HOW ABOUT SOME STARS?
SMASH
WHAT KINDA FREAK SHOW IS THIS?
I WAS JUST ASKING MYSELF THE SAME QUESTION
I'M GONNA BURN YOU DOWN, MAN!
BLAM BLAM
POW
GUNS DON'T KILL PEOPLE. IDIOTS WITH GUNS KILL PEOPLE
YOU AIN'T GONNA SHOOT ME, HOMES!

THAT'S FINE, YOU WANT A KICK-FIGHT, THEN SO BE IT.
I CAN SHOOT YOU WITH YOUR OWN PIECE JUST AS EASY, FREAK!
HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON ABOUT PLAYING WITH GUNS YET?
WHERE IS THE NECKLACE THAT BEARS THIS MARK?
WHAT "NECKLACE"? WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, FREAK SHOW?
...DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED HERE, BUT THESE BOYS SURE TOOK A BEATING.


HERE, KITTY, KITTY..
NO! LET GO OF ME!
CLARKSVILLE CITY PARK
NO! PLEASE DON'T!
OH, COME ON, CHICKIE. YOU KNOW YOU WANT IT

BACK OFF CUR!
...ORE ANGUISH I FELT, THE ANG... I BECAME. I WAS CROSSING TH... NE FROM MAN TO BEAST. I WAS BECOMING THE TIGER WHOSE TERRITORY WAS BEING DEFILED BY... ...ACKALS... AND I
"TIS AIN'T YOUR PARTY TO CRASH, SPANDEX-BOY
YOU BETTER GET YOUR OWN CHICK IF YOU WANNA WHET YOUR WHISTLE
YOU GOT ONE CHANCE TO RUN AWAY, THEN I'M GONNA MESS YOU UP, MAN!
YOU TOOK THE WORDS RIGHT OUT OF MY MOUTH.

OH, IT'S ON NOW!
TIME TO WATCH YOU BLEED, SUCKA!
I DON'T THINK SO.
KRUNCH
WHERE IS THE NECKLACE YOU TOOK FROM THE OLD LADY AT THE MALL?
FORGET YOU, PUNK! I DON'T GO TO NO MALLS!
SO THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT...

"I SOON LEARNED THE CONSEQUENCES OF GIVING IN TO MY ANGER..."
SO, IF YOU DON'T GO TO THE MALL, THEN WHICH ONE OF YOUR PLAYMATES DOES?
I AIN'T TELLING YOU NOTHIN', FOOL!
THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
"THE RAGE TOOK OVER AND INSTEAD OF LISTENING TO MY SURROUNDINGS AS I'D BEEN TRAINED TO DO-- ALL I COULD HEAR WAS THE WAR DRUM BEAT OF MY OWN HEART.
THE ONLY THING REMAININ' TO BE SEEN IS YOUR BRAINS ALL OVER THE PLACE, TOUGH GUY.
"I NEVER HEARD IT COMING--"
KRAACK
MAN, THIS GUY HITS HARD.
GOOD THING YOU HIT HARDER.
HA HA HA

"AND BY GIVING IN TO THAT ANGER, I LEFT AUNT BESSIE DEFENSELESS WHEN SHE NEEDED ME THE MOST..."
HURRY, SHE MAY NOT HAVE MUCH TIME!
SHE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS, IF WE DON'T REVIVE HER QUICKLY IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE.
GET HER TO THE ER!
IT'S TIME TO FINISH WHAT I STARTED...
INTENSIVE CARE UNIT
TO BE CONTINUED...

BEHIND THE MASK

The Phantom's costume.
By Ed Rhoades

The Phantom is credited by most as the first costumed hero in comics. He predates Superman and Batman and the plethora of others to wear a skintight outfit in following years. In a business where everyone is inspired or influenced by someone, how did The Phantom begin the whole thing?

Having already created the successful comic strip Mandrake the Magician in June of 1934, Lee Falk turned his attention to a new kind of hero. Since his original plan was to name his protagonist 'The Gray Ghost', it's possible that John Singleton Mosby was the kind of hero Lee had in mind. Mosby was a real-life daring figure whose exploits during the Civil War were similar to those of Lee's new character. Both Mosby and The Phantom single handedly captured an important general, freed imprisoned men and captured the attention of the public.

Mosby was gray because of his Civil War uniform, and it's possible that was the way Lee envisioned The Gray Ghost.

However, when Mandrake assistant artist, Ray Moore, began to translate Lee's ideas to comic panels, he and a group of fellow artists who shared a studio had meetings and discussions during which Ray and the guys planned how The Phantom would appear. Ray's widow, Claire Moore, told me that Lee only came to one or two of the meetings, and all of the Phantom art that was printed was Ray's work.

The hood or cowl was reminiscent of an old time executioner with a form suggesting a skull. The skintight shirt and tights were the sort of thing an old time circus performer would wear. The shorts were drawn with a hatching that gradually evolved into stripes that might be inspired by a costume from a Shakespearean play. It was no accident that the visual to the Oath sworn on the skull bears a resemblance to Hamlet's 'Alas Poor Yorick' scene.

The Phantom's eyes were shown early on in Ray Moore's drawings. Later, the convention of leaving white spaces instead had two advantages. It was easier to draw, and it looked a little spooky. Lee said the white eyes on ancient Greek and Roman statues inspired it, but in their day, those statues had eyes painted over them. The white eyes were a convention maintained by Wilson McCoy and Sy Barry. There were two rare occasions where Sunday strip artist, Bill Lignante, showed the Phantom's eyes. Once was when Queen Samaris asked the Phantom to marry her. Bill thought showing him wide-eyed made sense for the situation. Fans still haven't quit talking about it.

For the movies, discussions showed an expectation of not showing the Phantom's eyes or his face. However, I'm sure Billy Zane's agent had other ideas. When wearing the hard plastic molded mask, the area around his eyes was blackened so nothing showed but the whites of his eyes, however, his scenes as Mr. Walker made no attempt to hide his face. Billy and Phantom serial actor Tom Tyler wore a thick black mask when in costume. In the comics, the mask has varied somewhat being a bit thinner in the early 70's and thicker in the following decades.

The costume's color has been the subject of much discussion amongst Phantom fans. In the newspapers, The Phantom was referred to as a gray figure. The first color version of the character adorned the cover of the Big Little Book in 1936. For that issue, the Phantom's costume was an orange color. In the following Better Little Books, he was again orange for 'The Sign of the Skull,' green for 'Desert Justice', purple for 'The Return of The Phantom' blue for 'The Sky Pirates' and back to purple for 'The Phantom and the Girl of Mystery.'

In the first US Phantom comic to feature color, the character was given a brown costume.

When King Features Syndicate finally produced a Sunday version of the strip, they had to decide upon an official color. There is much speculation about this including a rumor that it was a printer's error making The Phantom purple. When considering possibilities, gray was just too drab to take advantage of color printing. Perhaps they tried using red and blue to get a neutral color...a substitute for an 'off gray.' The new Phantom purple was seen in all the US papers, but in other countries, they decided for themselves. In Scandinavia, his outfit is blue; in South America, Turkey, France, and Italy, it is red.

The Tom Tyler Columbia serial from 1943 was in black and white and Lee expressed a disappointment saying, "It's too bad they didn't have stretch material back then."

For the Paramount big budget film, there were about a dozen designs created, with the final one being two thin layers with a fabric showing lines that reacted as a moray pattern. The man responsible for the costume, Matt Britton says they were inspired by tribal tattoos from real pygmies to make an intricate design echoing the skull motif in the belt and ring.

In the animated cartoon series and the unused pilot for a newer Phantom film, the costume had chameleon like qualities.

I suspect that when a new film actually begins development, they will try to distance themselves from the Billy Zane film, which could disappoint fans, since that movie played pretty close to traditional Phantom lore.

More thought is going into movie costumes for comic characters these days. Batman's armored suit was result of a research and development for the military, Daredevil's leather costume is practical for gymnastic stunts over cement. In Superman Returns, the costume has a beveled 'S' with a leather like cape. A major concern in such designs is licensing. Making sure that kids are sold on buying action figures is almost as important as promoting the movie itself.

Moonstone's Phantom has a traditional purple costume with white spaces in the mask. The painted pulp-like covers of Joel Naprstek and the tight painted Doug Klauba covers provided an especially chilling effect. Moonstone's 'Legacy' presented a realistic depiction of how the first Phantom might have looked with a makeshift costume inspired by the Wasaka idol.

Both recent covers and interiors present a vintage look with the exception of metallic skull belt buckles that add another additional touch of realism.

While other comic heroes' costumes have changed through the years, the first costumed hero of comics continues with a mysterious look that holds up and still looks great after 70 years.